

Hot Tips

Good info for the new ham, and old stuff to refresh your memory



How to get people interested in ham radio

Once people become immersed in the world of amateur radio, it's only natural for many of us to want others to share the excitement. We've also learned by experience that reminding, coaxing, or even pushing a person to get licensed simply does not work, and often has the opposite effect. Setting up a ham radio demo, class, or other ham radio event rarely arouses interest in the normal person; often a heavy investment with little return. So, how does one go about getting more people interested in ham radio?

Attract instead of preach

The solution lies in *attracting them*, not *pushing them*. They have to *want* to get involved, and that means *they need a reason* to even go there, and that reason is seldom ham radio itself. The two biggest reasons people get into amateur radio are *utility* and *hobby*. The hobby side of amateur radio often attracts people without much convincing, so this focuses on the utility side.

◆ Set up an event that features something besides ham radio, but that uses ham radio incidentally (as a secondary activity), to showcase how it's operated to solve an interesting problem. People are interested in problems, because they get them thinking of how they might go about solving them. Then, people like seeing how you go about solving them. And if that solution includes ham radio, suddenly you've got their amateur attention, possibly in a way they've not thought of.

◆ Set up a preparedness fair, in which you present classes on food storage, water collection, sanitation, emergency handyman skills, communication, and sheltering in-place. During the communication and shelter-in-place classes, you can demonstrate how to use various forms of communication to either keep

current with events or to request assistance. And while you're attempting to request assistance, you can show how effective amateur radio is over other forms. This approach tends to generate a lot of questions.

◆ Set up a CERT class, which should focus on the seven major ideas outlined by FEMA. During the Organization portion, you can demonstrate that runners can be given orders by Incident Command to be sent to the Triage team. The runners run to the Triage team in ten minutes, deliver the orders, receive requests and questions about procedure from the Triage team, run back to Incident Command in ten minutes, receive answers to the requests and questions, run back to Triage team in ten minutes, only to find that the victim only had 25 minutes to live, and the running took 30 minutes. If both Incident Command and the Triage team had ham radios, their communication would have been almost instant, potentially saving the victim's life.

Tell them stories

◆ Your family sets out on a road trip. About 170 miles into your vacation and no bars on your phone, you become involuntarily separated by traffic. The vehicle in back encounters a turn in the road. Take the right or the left? You've brought your walkie-talkies, and try to communicate, and you know the other one is on, but nobody answers. You can demonstrate that, with ham radio, this situation could have turned out differently.

◆ If you need to get a message to somebody, it's pretty easy to do with your phone. But, that can be challenging if you or they are not near a cell tower, or are trying to send it to somebody who's outside of internet service. You can do just that with HF (high frequency) ham radio, as long as both you and your target have HF radios and HF antennas.